

## **Local Economy Bolstered by State Support** **By Senator Pete Campos**

Some revisions are being made to the capital outlay process the legislature uses to distribute funding for critical infrastructure around the state, but one thing will not change: state resources are vital to the local economy and will continue to flow to San Miguel County.

Since 1991, when I was first elected to the New Mexico senate, I have aggressively advocated for and secured state resources to assist the local economy. The funding comes in the form of operational funding, direct appropriations to area state agencies, local governments and educational institutions, and capital outlay for public works projects. I'll continue that effort this year and, as I've always done, I'll enlist the public's help in identifying and justifying critical projects.

The legislature looks at the needs of state agencies, school districts and colleges and universities and allocates funding for those entities primarily according to workloads and critical needs.

You have an important role in the new capital outlay process. The legislature is redoubling its efforts to effectively appropriate money for capital outlay projects by ensuring that funded projects are ready to begin, fill a void in a local community and can be completed in a reasonable amount of time. To help evaluate funding requests, the legislature is using an expanded request form that the public can prepare for a legislator's signature. (You can find the form at the web site, [legis.state.nm.us](http://legis.state.nm.us), and mail it to me either at home or the state capitol: Senator Pete Campos, State Capitol, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.)

The economic impact of capital outlay funding is magnified beyond the initial dollar amount of the appropriation for the project. Employees are hired, supplies are bought and customers are drawn to revitalized areas of a community. Road improvement projects make it easier for customers to get to businesses and students to get to school. Community center improvements provide a central meeting place for social, recreational and business gatherings. Water and sewer projects improve the quality of life for entire neighborhoods and communities.

As we look around, there is progress in our community. Every state agency, the

city of Las Vegas, county of San Miguel and educational institutions have construction projects underway and sizeable revenues to provide specific services. Just in the last two years alone, more than \$30 million has been appropriated for projects in San Miguel county.

Over time, more people will benefit from our initiatives in economic development and the services we fund directly through the legislature.

We must all work to ensure that these public dollars are spent wisely, but this is no different from how public entities operate every day. For example, teachers must be certified and qualified before they can be hired, general contractors must be able to secure bonding before they can undertake large projects, vendors must have proven products and newspapers must have a proven or documented circulation and must be in existence at least 26 weeks before legal advertisements can be placed.

These requirements are necessary to ensure that qualified personnel are hired and quality goods and services are delivered.

It is crucial that we work together, continue this important dialogue and improve our community for the next generation.